"It's True This No*tte*": Dialogic Relations and/in Discourse in the Cyberspace / *"É verdade este bi*le*te": relações dialógicas e(m) discurso no ciberespaço*

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study of sociocultural practices that exemplify how subjects interact online with offline events. We analyse selected posts collected from social media profiles supported by Facebook. Each excerpt shows the affirmative "It's true this notte," a rough translation of a written message addressed by a four-year-old Brazilian boy to his mother stating that there would "supposedly" be a school holiday the following day. The note went viral after his teacher posted it publicly on her social media timeline and the reassuring assertion was (re)appropriated multiple times in the cyberspace so as to as trigger a humour effect in different discourse instances. Grounded on the concepts of meme; remix; Bakhtinian dialogism and Foucauldian's ideas on truth, we perform a discursive analysis. Our results point to track marks of axiological positions of contemporary subjects that resort to irony to construct/share utterances in order to establish their will to truth in the digital landscape.
KEYWORDS: Dialogism; Discourse; Contemporary subject; Digital technologies

RESUMO

Este artigo contempla nosso estudo de práticas socioculturais que demonstram que/como o sujeito contemporâneo dialoga online *com enunciados advindos de acontecimentos do universo* off-line. *Nosso* corpus *apresenta postagens circuladas publicamente em páginas diversas no* Facebook *em que se lê: "É verdade esse bilete". A afirmativa, proveniente de um bilhete escrito por uma criança em sua esfera familiar e divulgado em redes sociais, foi (re)apropriada por múltiplos interlocutores no ciberespaço a fim de produzir efeitos de humor e(m) dizeres contraditórios em*

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diferentes instâncias discursivas. Para a análise, recorremos a elementos constitutivos do dialogismo de proposição bakhtiniana; aos conceitos de meme e remix e às discussões foucaultianas acerca da vontade de verdade. Nossas interpretações apontam que é possível rastrear, nas réplicas ativas analisadas, posições axiológicas que nos remetem ao sujeito contemporâneo, o qual, usando a ironia e(m) efeitos de humor, constitui/compartilha enunciados no intuito de estabelecer sua vontade de verdade na ágora digital.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Dialogismo; Discurso; Sujeito contemporâneo; Tecnologias digitais

First Words

Language, subjectivity and society are interfaced concepts that require an integrated study perspective. Accordingly, we believe the adoption of a dialogical approach to the analysis of sociocultural practices offers us a reasonable ground to construct knowledge of contemporary subjects and (their) discourse.

Finding support in the discussions upheld by Bakhtin (1999, p.181),[1] we consider that it is within discursive spaces that "dialogical relations" are found. Those relations constitute and denote a character of "[..] language in its concrete living totality." As the Russian philosopher explains, discourse lifeworld is "[…] a concrete, highly complex and multi-faceted phenomenon" (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.181).[2]

In the current days, we notice that the lifeworld of discourse is embedded in digital time-spaces, thus we trust that the "acts" (BAKHTIN, 1993)[3] performed by contemporary subjects are also intertwined with their constant movement *to and from* offline and online universes.[4]

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[1] BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneappolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

[2] For reference, see footnote 1.

[3] BAKHTIN, M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Trans. Vadim Liapunov. Ed. Michael Holquist &Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993.

[4] We aknowledge "oflline universe" as the actuality of living in time-spaces in an analogic, presential world, represented by the materialization of body encounters. As for "online world," we refer to digitally synchronized and ubiquitous living experiences which are materialized by algorithms and/in the cyberspace architectures.

According to Barton and Lee (2015),[5] language holds a remarkable role in the processes that have reconfigured our ways of communicating and, consequently, affecting how people interact and (inter)relate to each other nowadays. Barton and Lee (2013, p.15)[6] affirm that "[…] any researchers are aware that the central notions of interaction like *turn-taking* and *face-to-face* work differently with online data." It is also in accordance with Barton and Lee (2013, p.15)[7] the assumption that "[…] ideas of *author* and *audience* become even more complex" (emphasis from the original) when the lifeworld of discourse is contextualized in/by digital environments.

Moreover, we consider that the propositions of Bakhtin and the Circle, concerning dialogism in/and discourse and its concrete forms, are still valid, useful and relevant theoretical grounds for studying and (better) understanding subjects, societies and their cultural relations, which are contemporaneously established within a digital universe. Therefore, we agree that by exploiting digital landscapes – a conceptual term shared with discussions by Blommaert (2016) and Ivković (2012) – we might be able to access utterances[8] that – being immersed in dialogical relations, apart from other concomitant aspects, such as the linguistic/structural ones – register the routes that subjects go through during language contruction processes. Furthermore, our theoretical guidelines allow us to believe that it is possible to identify and recognize subjects by analysing the *acts* that result of their engagement in sociocultural practices, thus indicating their answers to the others' word. Consequently, we think that dialogical relations "[...] must clothe themselves in discourse, become utterances, become the positions of various subjects expressed in discourse [...]" (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.183).[9]

Hence, this paper presents our study of discursive manifestations situated in digital landscapes which carry along themselves routes and implications of utterances that stem from dialogues weaved by contemporary subjects, whenever those

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[5] BARTON, D.; LEE, C. *Language Online*: Investigating Digital Texts and Practices. London; New York: Routledge, 2013 (ebook edition).
[6] For reference, see footnote 1.
[7] For reference, see footnote 1.
[8] Following Brait and Melo (2005) propositions, we assume that Bakhtin and the Circle neither make a clear distinction nor present any form of consensus or unified conceptualization concerning the uses of conceptual terms such as utterance / concrete utterance / text and/or utterance as a byproduct. Thus, in this paper, we choose to use, in an exchangeable way, the terms utterance / product / manifestation when we refer to examples (materializations) that entail the *corpus* extracts we analyze.
[9] For reference, see footnote 1.

interlocutors assume axiological positions, actively responding to events which, henceforth, navigate at the *interface of online and offline universes*.

In order to construct further knowledge concerning such routes and utterance chains, we perform a qualitative investigation and, oriented by a social, historical and dialogical view of language, we analyze discourses that have been propagated in public and online time-spaces. In the interest of searching for *corpora*, we made use of a tool available to Facebook users[10] and looked up an assortment of posts published in the social network platform, using the word "*bilete*" and/or the expression "*é verdade este bilete*" [It's true this notte] [11] as search criteria.[12] The search findings guided us to several different public pages and profiles, some of them named after the searching terms. In addition, we also came upon a variety of memes, which used the aforementioned affirmative and/or word for creating humor effects.

The statement "*é verdade esse bilete*" [It's true this no*tte*] is part of a *sui-generis* act performed by a child at his home (offline universe) that ended up becoming very popular, a trending post that has been (re)appropriated multiple times after the young boy's school teacher publicly divulged it in a post she shared on her Facebook profile (thus spreading it to the online universe). The event was also reported by several online and offline Brazilian news media sources.[13]

Our corpus is then composed of public posts that were chosen amongst the findings resulted from the search performed at the platform Facebook. We have selected utterances that, from our point of view, can provide samples of sociocultural productions which allow us to observe tracking marks of different utterance positions assumed by contemporary subjects and also which are constituted in/by the acts performed by active interlocutors while they dialogue with the other's discourse.

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[10] This search tool was launched by the social network platform idealizer, Mark Zuckerberg, in 2013, and its uses and resources can be better known by visiting the page: https://www.facebook.com/help/460711197281324/ . Access on: Jan 20th, 2019.

[11] TN. A tentative translation, used as a pun and reference in the title, would be something similar to "It's true this notte." "Bilete" is a misspelling of the word "bilhete," meaning "note" in English. The misspelled word "notte" is just a tentative translation of the misspelled word "bilete."

[12] Following the rules established by Facebook administrators, the posts were selected after one of the authors of this article logged in her own social network profile supported by the platform.

[13] The Brazilian news media website G1 reported this event in an artcle that is available from: https://g1.globo.com/sp/bauru-marilia/noticia/2018/08/29/bilete-feito-por-menino-para-faltar-a-escola-vira-meme-e-ganha-versoes-feitas-por-bichos-e-famosos.ghtml. Access on: Oct 15, 2018.

Therefore, we assume that the excerpts compiled can be analysed in order to bring about "[…] *discourse* that is, an utterance, and receive an *author*, that is, a creator of the given utterance whose position it expresses" (BAKHTIN, 1999, p.184, emphasis from the original),[14] so that we might recognize a bit more about these contemporary subjects with(in) (their)- social practices.

Our analysis also relies on the observations offered by Knobel and Lankshear (2008) about remix, as well as it resorts to the ideas about memes that are presented by Komesu, Gambarato and Tenani (2018). In the present discussion, we assume memes as a discursive genre and remix as a strategic resource (that characterizes style). From our point of view, both items are mobilized by interlocutors so that utterances become concrete throughout discursive interactions. They are also meant to create meaning effects of humor, for the sake of establishing a polemic and/or antagonizing discourse.

Hereinafter, we expand the theoretical grounds which support our analytical device, and then we offer our own distinct reading of the selected *corpus*.

1 A Social, Historical and Dialogically Oriented Point of View of Subjects and Language

From a Baktinian perspective, dialogism can be conceptualized as a way of living. In different moments and throughout diverse discussions, Bakthin and the Circle focus on human relations that are established within the interface of language and society.

In the essay Discourse in the Novel, Bakhtin (1981)[15] exploits heteroglossia in discourse (in daily life as well as in the novel), as an opposing view to homogenizing and monologic linguistic perspectives. From his discussions, it is possible to infer that, in order to comprehend dialogism and its interface with language-ideology-society, it is necessary to understand that "[...] discourse is a social phenomenon – social throughout

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[14] For reference, see footnote 1.
[15] BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination*: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp.259-422.

its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.259).[16]

Any pursuit to understand *in which conditions* and/or *the ways in which* meaning-making processes occur will lead us to something else, which lies in extraposition, beyond the limits and domains of the word (as a linguistic code). From such a perspective, a word is no longer seen as a monolithic sign nor does it hold any enclosed, stable or stabilizing meanings or significations within its own boundaries.

As a matter of fact, Bakhtin explains that

> [d]ialogic relationships are possible not only among whole (relatively whole) utterances; [it] is possible toward any signifying part of an utterance, even toward an individual word, if that word is perceived not as the impersonal word of language but as [a] sign of someone else's semantic position, as the representative of another person's utterance; that is, if we hear in it someone else's voice (BAKHTIN, 1999 [1984], p.184).[17]

Bakhtin and the Circle embrace a distinguishable perspective of ethics and aesthetics, thus informing us that adopting a dialogic point of view implies to recognize language as a term that goes further from verbal expressions only, and which is also immersed in creative forces, thus being more that just a set of unifying rules. From this perspective, language surpasses the idea of being an assemblage of structural components and/or an organizing system, and it is then referred to as a set that aggregates internal, centralizing forces (i.e. linguistic rules underpinning language that make it possible for speakers to identify a shared code), whilst it is also similarly subjected to external forces connected to a universe saturated by energies that emerge from different spheres of the ideological life. The interrelationship between those *centripetal and centrifugal* forces is bilateral and exerts mutual influence.

When studying the speech genres, Bakhtin (1986)[18] affirms that the study of language needs to be situated in its social contexts, where pluralized human practices

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[16] For reference, see footnote 15.
[17] For reference, see footnote 1.
[18] BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Ed. by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

and discursive interactions are found. According to Bakhtin (2016, p.117),[19] it is within a multitude of diverse areas of the social life that "[…] language makes the discursive lifeworld possible and, on the other hand, it is influenced by itself."[20] As a consequence, new lexical and grammatical forms of linguistic expressions, as well as phraseologies, for instance, emerge from historically and socially situated discursive interactions. As a result, we trust it to justify our investigation of different discourses that display, as a common ground, an appropriation of the statement "*É verdade esse bilete*"[It's true this no*tte*].

Moreover, we believe that "[d]iscourse is language *in actu*. It is unacceptable to oppose language and discourse" (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.117). [21]

Likewise, when dealing with speech genres, Bakhtin (1986, p.60)[22] reinforces that discursive plurality and heterogeneity "[…] in no way dissafirms the national unity of language." The philosopher also highlights the role of speech genres in organizing multiple uses of language, in similarly multiple spheres of (human) activity. In addition, he explains that it is in each and every one of those spheres that participants' interactions are organized by/into oral or written utterances. The Bakhtinian utterances are concrete and single forms used by interlocutors, according to their specifities and objectives, in their own sphere. Utterances are recognizable for their thematic content, linguistic style and compositional structure – the three fundamental elements that characterize each utterance. Bakhtin (1986, p.60)[23] apprises that these three components "[…] are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance" (emphasis from the original). In addition, the investigator informs us that "[e]ach separate utterance is individual, of

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[19] The passage was published in Russian in 1997 as part of volume 5 of *The Collected Works of Bakhtin* (Russkie Slovari Editor). However, we bring it here as an excerpt of *Dialogue I* , translated from Russian to Brazilian Portuguese by Paulo Bezerra and published under a revised edition of *Gêneros do discurso* in 2016, from p.113 to p.124. As no recognizable English translations from the Russian publication could be accessed, we opted to translate the passage from Paulo Bezerras's edition. The text in Portuguese reads: "[...] a linguagem torna possível a vida discursiva, e por outro, ela mesma é influenciada por ela" (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.117).

[20] For reference, see footnote 19.

[21] In Portuguese: "[...] Discurso é a língua *in actu*. É inadmissível contrapor língua e discurso em qualquer que seja a forma. O discurso é tão social quanto a língua. As formas do enunciado também são sociais e, como a língua, são igualmente determinadas pela comunicação" (p.117). For reference, see footnote 19.

[22] For reference, see footnote 18.

[23] For reference, see footnote 18.

course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable type of these utterances. These we may call speech genres" (1986, p.60).[24]

Contrary to the Cartesian subject, who "is" just by thinking/as they think, the dialogic subject "becomes," when he/she dialogues. Unfinished, marked by a sense of incompleteness, this subject is never silent. Consequently, "[…] I live in a world of others'words. And my entire life is an orientation in this world, a reaction to others' words (an infinitely diverse reaction)" (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.143).[25] Accordingly, this is an active subject whose *act of becoming* – in discursive communications – is permeated by interdiscursivity and moved by a double-oriented and constitutive relationship between I-other. By engaging in discursive interactions, thus exercising alterity, the subject constitutes him/herself, while constructing language and affecting/being affected by the social practices that are being established. As a result, destined to be unfinished, the Bakhtinian subject needs to *listen and answer* to their interlocutors, in dialogues, in order to pursue what they lack for, *i.e*., something that, from their own singular place, they would not be able to see.

2 The Other's Discourse and Answerability: The Word in Dialogue and Humor

Within a dialogical perspective, comprehension is seen as a process in which interlocutors engage by taking an active and dialogued stand when they "[…] meet at a new, a third world, the world of contacting, they address each other, engage into active dialogic relationships […]" (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.113).[26] In that regard, Ponzio (2017), referring to Bakhtin's philosophical writings concerning the responsible act, explains that

> [...] "*Postupok*" is an act of thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, that is intended and that characterizes the uniqueness, the peculiarity, the monogram of each one, in its unicity, its impossible substitution, in its

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[24] For reference, see footnote 18.
[25] For reference, see footnote 18.
[26] For reference, see footnotes 18 and 19.

duty of responsibly answering, from the place they occupy, without alibis or exceptions [...] (PONZIO, 2017, p.10).[27]

Emphasizing how original it would be to broach issues about the subject within dialogic relations, Bakhtin (1986, p.119)[28] reaffirms his perspective of "[u]nderstandig as dialogue," as an "answerable deed," an act that is "answerably active" (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.36)[29] in response to previous utterances and, at the same time, a predecessor for other utterances to come. Stressing the idea that the answerable act creates a new and singular utterance that "[…] always creates something that never existed before", and also that "[…] has some relation to value," Bakhtin (1986, p.120)[30] refers to the utterance position in an interdiscursive chain, which inevitably refers to the other's speech, since something new that is created is

> […]always created out of something given (language, an observed phenomenon of reality, an experienced feeling, the speaking subject himself, …). What is given is completely transformed in what is created (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.120).[31]

Bakhtinian acts are characterized by a distinction that applies uniqueness to each deed and that demands answerability and responsibility from the subject. As this condition is inherent to the act, as Ponzio (2017) suggests, the subject is not allowed to look for and find any "loopholes" to move out of his responsible answer. Consequently, when a subject *becomes*, he/she leaves trackmarks throughout his/her utterances. That is, by examining discourses/utterances we may get closer to that subject who is enunciating – although such proximity, from a dialogical perspective, is always destined to be a partial take of it since, as researchers, we are also limited by the restrictions that our own place of speaking, our own points of view, impose on us.

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[27] In Portuguese: [...] "*Postupok*" é um ato, de pensamento, de sentimento, de desejo, de fala, de ação, que é intencional, e que caracteriza a singularidade, a peculiaridade, o monograma de cada um, em sua unicidade, em sua impossibilidade de ser substituído, em seu dever responder, responsavelmente, a partir do lugar que ocupa, sem álibi e sem exceção."
[28] For reference, see footnote 18.
[29] For reference, see footnote 03.
[30] For reference, see footnote 18.
[31] For reference, see footnote 18.

Diversely, even if a certain given utterance is always evidently unique, Bakhtin (1986, p.121)[32] reminds us that "[t]he word (or in general any sign) is interindividual." Thus, it is important to remember that dialogic relations, as the ones that incite effects of humour in remixed texts, memes and parody, are instances in which "[…] one encounters *integral*/positions, integral/personalities," although the expression of what is said extrapolates the limits of the speaker, because

> [t]he word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener also has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights, (after all, there are no words that belong to no one). The word is a drama in which three characters participate (it is not a duet, but a trio). It is performed outside the author, and it cannot be introjected into the author (BAKHTIN, 1986, pp.121-122).[33]

Concerning the excerpts analysed in this paper, the presence of humour, as a discursive resource, is highlighted. We understand that both polemical discourse and parody characterize "[…] the layering of meaning upon meaning, voice upon voice, strengthening through merging (but not identification), the combination of many voices" (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.121).[34]

Humouristic discursive contructions are not always meant to provoke laugh, as Brait (2014) informs. The researcher explains that as a discursive strategy, humour identifies a type of "game" (of some sort) that stresses existing tensions amongst what is said, what is meant to be said and the way it is said. Brait suggests that humour should be taken as "[...] a broad category, even if it is targeted as a revealing trace of a certain point of view, a way of overlooking the world" (2014, p.13).[35] Using humour as a resource to incorporate the other's discourse in his/her own utterance, recovering what was already-said, the enunciator requires a capable interlocutor who may be attentive to the "contradictions" resulting from an intentional unbalance, which is discursively

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[32] For reference, see footnote 18.
[33] For reference, see footnote 18.
[34] For reference, see footnote 18.
[35] In the original: "como categoria ampla, ainda que objetivado como traço revelador de um ponto de vista, um olhar sobre o mundo."

inflated, in between "the dimensions" of what is said in that (singular) utterance, which the subject is an author of, and the way in which it is said. As Brait highlights, such "game" is established by the enunciator "[…]aiming to unmask or subvert values, a process that necessarily counts on ways of engaging the reader, listener or audience" (BRAIT, 2014, p.140).[36] This is a discursive move that finds support in the direct appropriation of the other's word, turning it into an I/my own word, in order to express ambivalence between what the locutor is saying and what he/she actually wants to say.

The author's voice is not always treated as direct speech (as it will be seen in the analysis), and the appropriated utterance may remain as an ambivalent hint to what the enunciator wants to counterpoint between what-is-not-said when one alludes to the other's speech. Hence, to constitute humour as a desired effect of meaning, a certain discursive repertoire may be required from the interlocutor (the answerable interpreter of the utterance). Or, other times, it may be not.

One of the most relevant aspects of the genres currently found in digital landscapes – and, in this case, (re)produced on online social media networks – is the relative distance the enunciator takes from the voice of the previous utterance's author, even though that utterance is interfaced with the (new) uniquely (re)construed one.

Recalling Bakhtin's instructions (1986),[37] the fusion of voices would not always result in an identified distinction. We claim that a meme, for instance, is a digitally situated genre that, by remixing different discourses (often recurring to multimodality and multisemiosis), may end up keeping it far from the contexts in which the other's word was produced. As a result, later interlocutors may not even need to aknowledge what the dialogically related and appropriated word has previously implied/protagonized. Therefore, the contexts of production of an appropriated discourse/utterance might be or not erased. Thus, we move on to present the production context and the characterization of the utterances which we are about to dialogue with.

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[36] In the original: "[…] com objetivos de desmascarar ou subverter valores, processo que necessariamente conta com formas de envolvimento do leitor, ouvinte ou espectador."
[37] For reference, see footnote 18.

3 The Cyberespace as the Greek *Ágora*: Meme and *Remix* in Sociocultural Manifestations

Ancient Athens was an economically prosperous and caotic urban centre that attracted a huge migration flux, becoming the home for a public meeting point, later turned into a permanent arena, named *Ágora* – a word derived from *agorien*, used to refer to discussions, deliberations or decision-making processes. The public Greek square was destined for debates and social, economic and political discussions, generally described as a place where many democratic decisions were made, affecting the whole society. In this regard, what really interests us is that the Greek *ágora* was a public place reserved for both business meetings and socializing. Accordingly, we like to think of *ágora* as a metaphor for cyberspace – or vice-versa – a place, a time-space that favours discussions, debates, business dealings and entertainment.

Full of mediatic resources and its own affordances – such as synchronicity and ubiquity, gratuity and digital mobility, provided by Internet and the World Wide Web – the cyberspace takes a role which approximates it to the public Greek square. This contemporary *ágora,* contextualized and constituted in digital landscape, would supposedly be a place for emerging pluralities and diversities (of cultures, languages and identities), enabling citizens from all origins and social classes to meet and manifest.

Blommaert (2016) affirms that digital landscapes can be seen as a (kind of) expanding urban scenery where a great deal of the current social interactions we either observe or take part occurs. The cyberspace, full of resources and affordances, has then become the public arena where we observe "[...] the way in which new modes of communication merge and interact with old ones, thus reshaping existing communicative economies at all levels of social life and metropoles to margins in the world," as Blommaert (2016, n.p.) explains. Finally, we notice that the current *ágora* is a digital arena where the subjects construct, manifest, represent and constitute themselves/the others, throughout the dialogical and dialogued relations they participate in and/or in the clash of different forces and power reactions that are manifested in discursive interactions on social networks. As a result, we trust that overlooking the

digital *ágora* as a research field may be a possible way to understand a society and its subjects in/by their discourses. Therefore, two different aspects deserve our attention: memes and remix.

As a genre, memes can be seen as a cultural phenomenon that manifests ideas supported by multimodal texts and other resources found in the cyberspace used to construct, share and fastly circulate those manifestations. Knobel and Lankshear (2007), Komesu et al (2018, p.2) and Azzari (2018) broach the role of memes in communication and language fields as one of the ways in which interlocutors make meaning, interact and produce knowledge. This approach requires an expanding notion of text as well as it calls for a reevaluation of the idea of literacies. As proposed by Azzari (2018) and Komesu *et al* (2018, p.3), memes should be observed from a dialogic perspective. Bakhtin's (1993)[38] ideas concerning the problems of the word and the utterance chains allow us to treat memes as a genre that recalls the concrete life of language. Memes posted on social media timelines are touched by interlocutors' marks, a result of reappropriating the other's word and a way in which subjects manifest themselves.

Azzari (2018, p.495) also explains that memes usually include photos, screenshots, paintings and excerpts of literary texts, amongst other elements. Therefore, they can be seen as an answerable deed which registers a responsive act of a subject-author, constituted by alterity and the dialogic relations with the other's word. Aesthetically, memes show an heteroglossic base which implies the gathering of voices and that, by compilating the others' texts, create new ones. This aesthetic process, entailing a remarkably hybrid structuring/style, is maximized by the use of one of the multiple resources available from digital contexts: remix.

Although remixing genres, modes and semiosis are processes that preceed the advent of Internet, we agree with Knobel and Lankshear (2008, p.22) that remixing has become a sociocultural practice that deserves to be looked into in the digital era due to its relevance as a literacy practice that has designed new reading/writing task shapes.

The contemporary subject-author finds support in computing tools to look for, save, edit, cut and paste texts, thus becoming a digital *bricoleur.* These procedures register enunciative positions of subjects who dialogicly create utterances by departing

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[38] For reference, see footnote 3.

from what they have been "given" (BAKHTIN, 1986; 1993),[39] thus establishing a new utterance to be read/interpreted so that other ones are to come. This is an interdiscursive and intersubjective process in which *language affects* and *is affected by* interactions and that (re)veal the inherent plurality of cultural phenomena, a fact suggested by our analysis – to which some of the aspects found on Foucauldian's propositions are added.

4 Appropriations of the "No*tte*" and their Implications for this Debate

The first excerpt we focus on concerns a note that originated several discursive appropriations, some of which are indicated in the analysis. In fact, they are presented here in the form they appeared on social media profiles, when the "notte*"* was circulated in the online universe, becoming the "given" utterance that triggers lots of other ones.

Gabriel – a five-year-old boy who lives in small country town in Brazil – decided to write down and deliver a note to his mother because he did not want to go to school the following day. Fig. 1 presents a screenshot of a publicly post shared on Facebook by Gabriel's teacher – who received the note from the child's mother. Due to the unusual character of the text, the post spread out fastly, starting a new utterance chain.

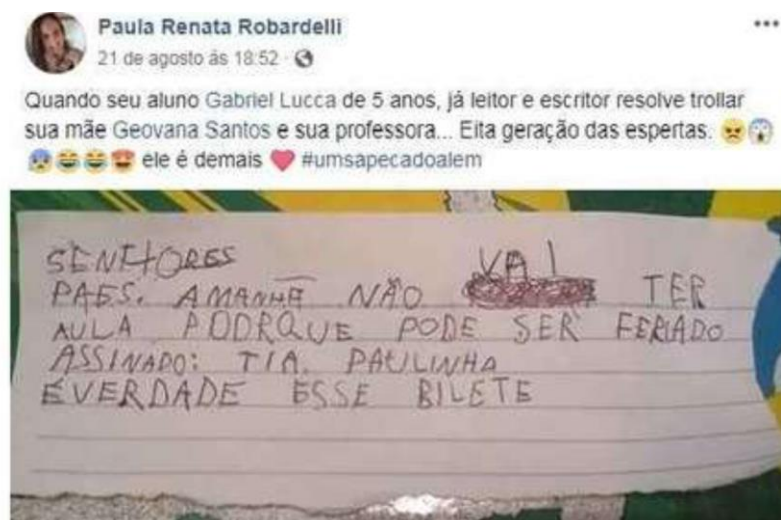[39] For reference, see footnotes 18 and 3.

Figure 1: Printscreen of a post with Gabriel's "bi*l*ete." Available from: https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/app/noticia/brasil/2018/08/23/interna-brasil,701605/menino-escreve-um-bilete-em-nome-da-professora-para-nao-ir-a-aula.shtml. Access on: Jan 20, 2019.

The boy's *deed* (the writing of the note and the action of delivering it to his mother, establishing a discursive interaction) marks a social practice situated in the offline universe – the production of a genre commonly used in everyday life. The "notte" of this five-year-old language enunciator informs us that not only is Gabriel already literate (he knows how to read and write accordingly to his early age), but he has also developed social literacies knowledge concerning the uses of notes (in this specific case, how\ to circulate messages between school and family). The social literacy in question indicates that Gabriel understands the functions of that genre in the specific context and knows how to (re)use it, recognizing conditions of production such as addressing an intended interlocutor (his mother, in that instance). The boy also perceives how power relations are established between interlocutors (teacher and mother, respectively), when he decides to ensure the "validity" of his discourse by stating "It's true this notte."

In order to begin our analysis of this excerpt (Fig. 1), it is adequate to establish a brief dialogue with the Foucauldian concept of truth (one that is developed many times

throughout this author's works). According to Foucault (1980),[40] truth refers to "the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth" (FOUCAULT, 1980, p.131).[41] It is not because they represent *the* truth *in fact*, but because they indicate the conditions to a *regime of truth* which is validated as such by the social and historical conditions, that is, it is marked by a time and space and by who can talk, i.e., it is authorized and legitimated by the order of discourse. Therefore, truth is determined by power relations and is sanctioned by the instances of knowledge control and, consequently, speech control, which are located in different social instances, such as school and family, institutions that are present in the interdiscourse which inhabits the utterance under analysis.

Concerning the analysis of the linguistic materiality in Fig. 1, we initially identify, in the offline universe where it is produced, the discursive written genre note. There are elements which bring it to play whilst, at the same time, question the truth games the utterance is submitted to. Firstly, we have some visual aspects which put into question the "truthfulness" of the note: in spite of this being a daily, informal genre, the block lettered handwriting (not cursive) as well as the ortography reveal an enunciator who, although literate, is still in the literacy process *(perants "paes"; notte "bilete")*, what makes the interlocutor doubts that the teacher could be the enunciator (since she represents the school as an institution and, in its name, would be the one responsible for informing that the following day "could be a holiday." This fact also causes strangeness to the interlocutor, since the academic calendar is prepared by the school (institution) and it is then made known and shared with the parents in advance. The erasure in the note is another hint of these "fluctuations" in the field of the norm, as the teacher would be addressing the students' parents (another institution little Gabriel is submitted to) and, therefore, she would probably not make a mistake in this type of document, i.e., she would not use such a colloquial register in a message to be sent to the parents.

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[40] FOUCAULT, M. *Power/Knowledge:* Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972-1977. Ed. by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

[41] For reference, see footnote 40.

There are other linguistic hints that put the "truthfulness" of the note – that we see as a "will to truth" (FOUCAULT, 1972, p.219)[42] – into doubt, since Foucault (1980)[43] advocates that it is constructed by an institution which supports and distributes it. Gabriel, in the name of the teacher, signs the note as "Aunt Paulie," an affectionate treatment which, most probably, students themselves use to address the teacher. This is *the* hint that reveals the addresser's true "identity." The "awkward" modalization established in the construction "Tomorrow *it is not going to have* classes because it *may be* holiday" suggests the "certainty" that there will not be classes, but shows doubts about the following day really being a holiday. This impairs the logic of the expressed thought: if it were a holiday, there would not be any classes, something the school as an institution would not be doubtful about.

Also, there is the need to reinforce the announcement by the means of inserting a "P.S." (*post scriptum*), with the value of an assertion ("it's true this notte"), in the structure of the communication. This indicates that the speaker is not quite sure about the "efficiency" of his announcement, applying a "greater value" of truth, thus reinforcing, his "will to truth," which is related to the production of a particular meaning: maybe Gabriel's wish to "skip" classes the following day.

In fact, this utterance unexpectedly unfolds various other meanings resulted from its appropriation and remix in a myriad of contexts of production. Each one of these new utterances, and their intended meanings, will function inversely in the construction of a truth. Since they resort to ambiguity as a propriety of irony (BRAIT, 2008, p.51), they will provoke an avalanche of meanings which escape from the intended objectivity of Gabriel's note, thus establishing different forms of interdiscursivity that dialogue with the previous (appropriated) utterance through answerable acts. On the one hand, we have noticed that it is in the use of disciplinarily discursive procedures initiated by the institutions that the note wishes to constitute its "will to truth," instituted by the social rules that normalize every subject's life and little Gabriel's as well.

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[42] FOUCAULT, M. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language.* Translated from the French by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
[43] For reference, see footnote 40.

On the other hand, due to its failure to validate itself as a "document" of truth –
mostly because of the rupture of the total comprehension of this set of rules – Gabriel's
note brings about other meanings that put into question such "games of truth" in an
ironic and humourous manner.

Performed by a young student, the act fascinates us and calls our attention for its
cleverness and boldness as well as for the fact that, despite its author's early age, a
dialogue is somehow successfully established between the boy and his intended reader.
However, the repercussions generated by the social media post which shared Gabriel's
utterance are even more astonishing and meaningful. The unfolding results of the
several different discursive (re)appropriations that other countless (inter)locutors have
made of the statement "It's true this notte" have been seen throughout several pages and
profiles anchored by Facebook.

About eight days after Gabriel's "notte" trended on the web as a social media
post (Fig. 1), his teacher also resorted to it as a form of linguistic concreteness and
stylistic mark reappropriation (BRAIT, 2008). In order to cause effects of humour, she
created another public post in which the statement reappeared and shared it on her own
Facebook profile's timeline (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Screenshot of the teacher's post. Available from:
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1963919000313503&set=p.1963919000313503&type=3&th
eater. Access on: Feb 05, 2019.

Figure 2 shows the answerable act performed by the teacher who dialogues with
the others' utterances, thus joining in the chain of utterances resulted from discursive

interactions previously established with her initial post (represented by Fig.1). This new post (Fig. 2) features a photograph of the teacher holding a poster (supposedly *transmuted* to represent a note, or vice-versa), that addresses *Reebok Brasil*,[44] a maker of sports goods. Apparently, the photo is set at a gym where she would practice "crossfit," a fitness training modality.

Using irony and resorting to humour (and maybe, in this case, aiming at laughter), the teacher establishes a dialogic relation to several other answerable acts that turned the "notte" statement into a stylistic resource which materializes a discursive strategy. Although the post (Fig.2) is classified as "public," her "notte" has got both an attributed addressee and an explicit objective. The enunciator (subject-author) affirms that she "*needs*" a (desired) pair of trainning shoes, what she justifies by declaring herself a "*crossfit lover.*" From a semantic point of view, what is unsaid is still perceived: an ambiguity that is perlocutionarily constituted: her wish to get a pair of tennis shoes directly from its maker for free. Thus, we understand that the utterance establishes "[...] the interdiscourse, the different isotopias that produce the ironic effect," which is "marked by very precise elements from both a verbal and visual point of view" (BRAIT, 2008, p.51).[45]

The picture portrays a smiling teacher who holds up a sign, as if having fun with a "notte" she seems to have written with a big colorful marker on drawing paper. It shows some of the same stylistic features that appear in Gabriel's message, such as: undulating underlining; the use of "*Ass.*:", an informal abbreviation for "*assinado*" (signed by…), and irregularly sized letters that progressively decrease in size, thus indexing a writer who is still struggling to control spacing in handwritten tasks.

Resorting to making "in-between-the-lines" meaning, and (sub)verting the veiled controversy that characterizes irony – the teacher says what she "actually" means to say. As a subject-author, she (re)assumes the catchphrase "It's true this notte," though it is now done by an authoritative, authoral and answerable voice, whilst she

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also becomes inexorably responsible for the act (BAKHTIN, 1993).[46] This becomes evident by the use of the adverb "really," an attempt to establish one's own truth; to legitimize her own discourse, to validate her utterance – or, as it is proposed by Foucault (1972; 1980),[47] her "will to truth."

Figure 2 allows us to track down different enunciative positions of a contemporary subject engaged in a digitally contextualized situated practice. Her current utterance refers to her previous one in which she assumes her social role as a bewildered teacher (Fig.1). Moreover, she also takes up a different enunciative position when she dialogues with a series of other utterances that represent answerable acts to her own previous post. Each "new" utterance took what was "given" (the one shown by Fig. 1) to create other ones which are characterized by saying-the-unsaid – what the teacher now assumes as a "given" and incorporates in her new authored utterance. Conversely, the current enunciative position, as seen in Fig. 2, indicates a social subject who discursively and dialogically navigates throughout digital landscapes in order to communicate a personal interest under the guise of a parody. This position shows that the enunciator herself becomes (a part of) a meme.

Remixing verbo-imagetic resources (her own photograph and a written verbal text), this subject ressignifies the "note" (or, in this case, "no*tt*e") and hybridizes different genres such as a (type of school) poster, a sign and a social media post (message). The verbal text that composes this current profile post is the same one that can be read on the "poster-note" the enunciator is seen holding up in the photograph. Transcribed as if it were a subtitle, it stands for a distinction between: the locutor who elected a certain writing style for a "no*tt*e" (which characterizes a photo-meme); and the subject-author of the teacher's written profile post, thus differentiating both enunciative positions and social roles.

This sociocultural practice situated in the digital *ágora* also allows us to notice relations established by this subject-who-became-a-meme to the visibility granted by the *world web*, as well as she resorts to some of its consequences, such as public image recognition (a result of the noticeability of the post represented in Fig. 1), and the

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[46] For reference, see footnote 03.
[47] For reference, see footnotes 40 and 42.

Bakhtiniana, São Paulo, 15 (1): 7-34, Jan./March 2020.

repercussions aimed at by the means of a parody. Moreover, this enunciative position also enables us to identify: possible representations of the self, how the other is seen by the enunciator and lastly, what this subject thinks about the communicative/discursive potential of social relations established in the digital *ágora*.

Hence, finding support in different digital resources, the genres – these "kind of stable" and countless utterances – are, in fact, (re)configured.

As an example of this transmutation/hybridization which the note has undergone, we point out a social network profile also located on Facebook, represented by Fig. 3, which portrays a screenshot of its initial page. The profile page "Bi*l*ete" ("No*tte*") informs the readers that it was created just a couple of weeks after the post represented by Fig.1 was circulated.

Figure 3: Screenshot from the home page of a profile named "Bilete". Available from:
https://www.facebook.com/ehverdadi/. Access on: Feb 11, 2019

In spite of sporting parodies of various formats and themes, the profile (previously autocategorized as "information" and currently set as "visual arts") favours a critical angle, prone to dialogue with political discourses, what can be noticed by the page's cover picture. Displayed in Fig. 3, the picture shows a remixed image (a drawing) of the Brazilian flag that, with the help of "copy and paste" tools, has been strategically overplaced with a clipping of the statement "It's true this notte," materializing an extract of the child's note represented in Fig. 1. The interdiscursive reference to Gabriel's note lends certain naivety to the sarcastic tone implied by the

ambiguous play between the saying "Order and Progress" (the official saying in the Brazilian flag) and the effect of humour stemed from the tagline, which is then set on irony.

Hence, the subject's enunciative position, addressed to the general public, pressuposes that interlocutors hold previous knowledge of the intended uses of "It's true this notte." A close reading of this cover picture shows us that there is an effort towards promoting "[...] the interactive work in the construction of the ironic meaning, according to the idea of shared knowledge" as Brait (2008, p.53) mentions.[48] We understand that

> [t]his vision is aligned to the idea of series interference as, involved by the discursive, ideological and imaginary formations (which is just a "didactic," "methodological" differenciation, in many instances), the interlocutors share knowledge so as to decodify, either constantly or not, the implications, the suggestions that are conveyed [...] (BRAIT, 2008, p.53).[49]

In regard to the particular utterance represented by Fig. 3, a distinguishing fusion of voices, loaded by polyphony, seems to have been intentionally mantained, so that interlocutors might identify the three "characters" protagonizing the dialogical "drama" of voices pertaining to the word, as Bakhtin (2011, p.238) states, as well as the social stream in which the utterances sail, according to Vološinov (1986)[50] explanations. A similar process can be observed in Fig. 4:

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[48] In the original: "trabalho interativo na construção da significação irônica, conforme a ideia de conhecimento partilhado."

[49] In the original:[e]ssa visão se alinha à ideia de interferência de séries na medida em que, envolvidos pelas formações imaginárias, ideológicas e discursivas (cuja diferenciação em muitos momentos é apenas "didática," "metodológica"), os interlocutores partilham conhecimentos a ponto de decodificar, constantemente ou não, as implicações, as sugestões que estão veiculadas [...].

[50] VOLOSCHINOV, V. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I.R.Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
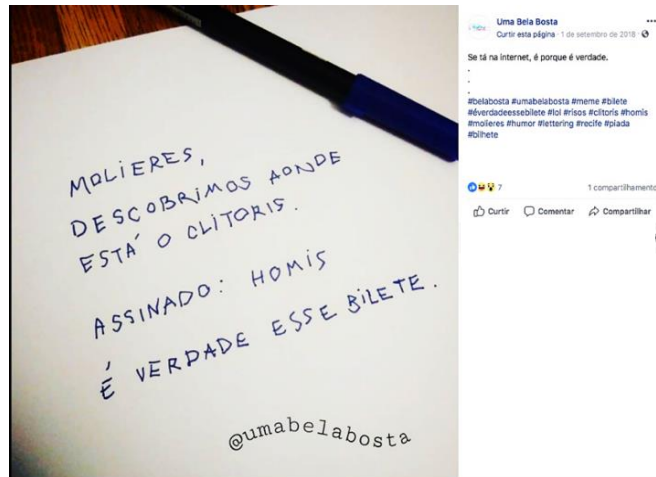
Figure 4: Screeshot of a post on the timeline of the page "*Uma Bela Bosta.*"[51] Available from: https://www.facebook.com/umabelabosta/photos/a.150854405357607/529659387477105/?type=3&theater. Access on: Fev 11, 2019.

The post (Fig. 4) was circulated by a page entitled "*Uma Bela Bosta*" ("Some Pretty Shit"). The anarchist page title displays mockery and/or irony in its tone, encloses a contradiction ("pretty" *versus* "shit"), as well as it indicates a sort of critical orientation. Furthermore, the intentional contradiction in its title implies criticity towards its own contents, which constitute its "will to truth." That is corroborated by the statement "If it is in the internet, it is because it is true,"[52] materializing a denunciation, since it is "some nice shit." The utterance presents many hashtags, a discursive procedure regularly used at the digital *ágora*. It exposes a desire for the post to overflow and, meanwhile, it dialogues with different multiple interlocutors (who use hashtag search engines to locate specific contents). This answerable act also sends us back to the idea of "spectacularization of the self,"[53] a feature examined by Sibília (2016), which is certainly facilitated by/in the confines of the digital arena. In regard to digital narratives, Sibília points out "how the whole fascination unfolds in the interconnected screens by

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[51] Roughly translated as "a pretty shit." The text reads: "w*e*m*e*n, [we] found out where the *clitoris* is. Signed by men*s*. It's true this notte."

[52] In the original: "se tá na internet, é porque é verdade."

[53] In the original: "espetacularização do eu."

the digital networks – and also, sometimes, the boredom and the irrelevance – of 'life the way it is'" (SIBILIA, 2016, p.104).[54]

We believe that the desire to be seen/read/spectacularized requires a subject who can prove to be aware of what happens at the digital *ágora*. Consequently, the (re)configuration of the "no*tte*" represented by Fig. 4 is an answerable act which is part of the *modus operandi* of a device of power which obliges the subject to surrender to repetition, parody, remix and memes, so that this subject might share the trending/viral process that constitutes contemporary discourses and subjects. Therefore, the digital landscape is a space-time of sameness-otherness, i.e. of the same-other inscribed in the linguistic materiality, of the same-other that constitutes the subject of our days.

Finally, we would like to point out that this sameness-otherness (another ethics) is also configured by aestheticizing processes (another aesthetics). Thus, we notice that in this post (Fig. 4) there is a generalizing effect caused by intentional misspelled plural nouns use, marked by "woman*s*" ("*molieres*") and "men*s*" ("*homis*"). A similar aestheticization process configures the style of the (re)appropriated utterance by resorting to the use of block letters and writing on white drawing paper with a big marker. It is present in the linguistic materiality that transmutes "p*er*ents" ("*paes*") from Fig. 1 into "w*eme*n" ("*molieres*") from Fig. 4, overflowing the same process to "men*s*" ("*homis*"). Accordingly, orthography features an aestheticization process resorted to in order to create effects of irony, thus reinforcing how viral "It's true this notte" ("É verdade esse bi*l*ete"), added to the statement that affirms "If it is on the internet, it is because it is true" ("*Se está na internet, é porque é verdade*"). Additionally, we could still deepen our analysis of the utterance (Fig. 4) by tackling the semantic-objectal interpretation of what is said ("We have discovered where the clitoris is" ("*Descobrimos aonde fica o clitoris*"). However, we believe that, for the time being, it suffices to remind our readers that decades ago, Foucault (1978)[55] pointed out the proliferation of discourses about sexuality. In that way, we realize that, from a dialogical and interdiscursive perspective, the statement also indicates disputes over

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[54] In the original: "como se desdobra, nas telas interconectadas pelas redes digitais, todo o fascínio – e, às vezes também o tédio e a irrelevância – de 'a vida como ela é'."

[55] FOUCAULT, M. *The History of Sexuality*. Volume I: An Introduction. Translated by Robert Huley. New York: Pantheon books, 1978.

men's ignorance to what concerns women's bodies. Inserted in this post, the ambiguity-irony in relation to the (lack of) knowledge about "where the clitoris is" ("*aonde fica o clitóris*"), and its consequently (dis)pleasures, exacerbates its effects of an indisputable assertive, a *no-truth*, mostly because it is exposed to uncontrolled dissemination in the digital *ágora*. In this case, a regime of truth is functioning: who says, what is said, to whom it is said, when it is said, where it is said.

All in all, the post (Fig. 4) helps us notice how far and detached Gabriel's "notte" ("bi*l*ete") – the *given*, (re)appropriated utterance – is. Coming from the offline universe, the utterance was naively created by an ingenuous and genuine boy who just wanted to spend another (lazy) day at home.

Final Words

In this paper, we grounded our considerations on Bakhtin's propositions in order to discuss dialogic processes of enunciators through/within answerable acts. In our analysis, we also resorted to Foucault's discussions about the production of truth, since our *corpus* was constituted by results of our search for the occurrence of "It's true this no*tte*" ("É verdade esse bi*l*ete"), an assertive derived from a post circulated on a social media profile with great repercussion and actively answered by interlocutors in the digital *ágora*. From our point of view, due to the contradictions presented in the initial post, the "given" utterance was (re)constituted as an aesthetic materialization of irony, to generate effects of humour in its reoccurrences, when it was remixed and circulated in other social media posts.

Our investigation suggests that the (re)appropriated note, originally written by a little boy, was turned into a meme and, then, into a tagline in the composition of several other memes, besides other discursive expressions. It has been (re)configured by remix and humour strategies throughout diverse forms of parody. On the other hand, the "notte" ("bi*l*ete") also became a proper noun, a first name, it got an entity status, it was personalized as a synonym for the ambiguous and ubiquitous representation in the other's discourse, dialoguing between *offline* and *online* universes.

The interpretation of the excerpts provided evidence of how a subject marks his axiological positions *in* and *by* discourse, when (s)he makes/shares meanings, within answerable acts to the other's discourse. At the same time, these acts are configured as same and other. They are revealed by the materiality of discourses, indicating tracks of the subject/enunciator as well as mechanisms of truth production working in the discursive thread. They also reveal spectacularization and aestheticization processes that refer us to *prét-à-porter* subjects (ANDRADE; AMARANTE, 2015) who consume something, consume themselves and get others to consume, in the digital arena.

However, it is worth saying that we are aware that this discussion places us as interpreters without an alibi, with a responsibility we assume when we interpret discourses, since meaning-making relations, as any other ones, are always dialogical (BAKHTIN, 1993).[56] In other words, this analysis is neither set as definitive nor the last one, but it is offered here as an answerable act, a dialogue we establish as authors of this deed, an utterance in a chain of utterances to come.

All in all, we trust that our results should be seen as provisory only, though we also understand that by pointing out *who* says it, *what* is said, to *whom* it is said, *when* it is said, *where* it is said and *how* it is said, i.e. by highlighting dialogic relations in discursive communication, our analysis brings to light some of the elements of the regime of truth (suggested in the Foucauldian discussions) that have been constituted in the digital *ágora*, which we hope may be one of the contributions of this work to forthcoming studies featuring contemporary discourses and subjects.

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[56] For reference, see footnote 3.

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Statement of Authorship and Responsibility for Published Content

We declare that all of the authors had access to the research *corpus*, participated actively in the discussion of the results, and conducted the review and approval process of the paper's final version.

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